

For Immediate Release

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*Washington, DC* – Following the tragic suicides of several teenagers, Congressman Albio Sires released the following statement condemning intolerance and bullying:

“I am deeply saddened by the recent suicides of several young people who were harassed for their known or perceived sexual orientation. This tragic loss of life serves as a reminder of the private fight that so many of our LGBTQ youth bravely encounter, and of the national fight that must be waged against bullying and bigotry in our communities.

“A student from my district recently reached out to me to share his story of growing up gay in the United States. He told me that in school, he witnessed an openly gay student being constantly ridiculed, so he choose to keep quiet, explaining that the thought of coming out was

unbearable. This young man came to me with his story to stress that depression and thoughts of suicide are not uncommon among gay teens. Unfortunately, these feelings are familiar to many. We must respond in a manner that will help halt the isolation that so many gay teens feel.

“I was impressed by this young man’s strength and advocacy on this issue. He admitted while that the slurs and insults he has heard over the years have remained the same, he has changed. He has learned more, he has gotten stronger, and the insults hurt less. He wants those suffering to know that their lives have value and that their lives will get better.

“I want to remind those of you facing discrimination that you are not alone and that it will get better, and if you are struggling, reach out and ask for help. There are millions and millions of your fellow Americans who are standing with you and fighting to erase the intolerance that you face today. They are fighting so that the generations that follow you do not encounter the same obstacles that you face today. As this brave student urged me, I urge all Americans to take every opportunity to reaffirm the value of each and every one of our nation’s children.”

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